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IDF's ex-top lawyer held amid furore over leak of abuse video

• Woman, children among three killed in Gaza by Israeli fire • Bill seeking death penalty for Palestinian suspects gets Netanyahu's support

GAZA: The Israeli military's former top lawyer has been arrested, amid a deepening political showdown over the leak of a video showing severe abuse of Palestinian detainee by IDF soldiers.

Maj Gen Yifat Tomer-Yerushalmi, who resigned as the IDF's military advocate general last week after a criminal investigation was launched into the leak, briefly went missing on Sunday before turning up alive and well on a beach.

Broadcast in August 2024 on an Israeli news channel, the footage shows reserve soldiers at the Sde Teiman military base in southern Israel taking aside a detainee, then surrounding him with riot shields to block visibility while he was allegedly beaten and stabbed in the rectum with a sharp object.

The detainee was treated for severe injuries, *BBC News* reported.

Five reservists were charged with aggravated abuse and causing serious bodily harm to the detainee. They have denied the charges and have not been named.

On Sunday, four of the reservists wore black masks to hide their faces as they appeared at a presser along with their lawyers, demanding the dismissal of their trial.

On Monday, it emerged the detainee at the centre of the case was released in October as part of a prisoner exchange.

In her resignation letter, Yerushalmi said she took full responsibility for any material that was released to the media from the unit.

"I approved the release of material to the media in an attempt to counter false propaganda against the army's law enforcement authorities," she said.

That is a reference to efforts by some right-wing political figures in Israel to claim that the allegations of severe abuse of the Palestinian detainee had been fabricated.

She added: "It is our duty to investigate whenever there is reasonable suspicion of acts of violence against a detainee."

After her resignation, Defence Minister Israel Katz issued a fierce condemnation of her conduct.

"Anyone who spreads blood libels against IDF troops is unfit to wear the army's uniform," he said.

PM Benjamin Netanyahu echoed his words, saying that the incident at Sde Teiman was "perhaps the most severe public relations attack that the State of Israel has experienced since its establishment".

Overnight, a police spokesperson announced that two people had been arrested on suspicion of "leaking and other serious criminal offences" as part of an investigation.

Israeli media reported that the pair were Gen Tomer-Yerushalmi and the former chief military prosecutor, Col Matan Solomosh.

Three killed by Israel

Meanwhile, Israeli gunfire killed three more Palestinians, including a woman and a child, besides wounding several children on Monday in the Gaza Strip, further testing the fragile US-backed ceasefire.

Israeli forces also raided the Shuafat refugee camp in the north of occupied East Jerusalem on Monday evening, according to the Palestinian news agency *Wafa*. Troops entered the camp and fired tear gas canisters at residents and their homes, it added.

However, the Israeli military said it had attacked southern Gaza, claiming individuals had crossed the so-called 'yellow line' demarcating the area of the enclave currently under Israeli control, in what it said was a violation of the ceasefire agreement.

On the other hand, residents said, Israeli forces continued to demolish houses in the eastern areas of Rafah, Khan Younis, and Gaza City.

Death penalty proposed

Separately, an Israeli parliamentary committee on Monday advanced a bill proposing the death penalty for Palestinian 'terror' suspects — a move pushed for by far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir.

The National Security Committee approved the amendment to the penal code, which will now be passed onto the parliament for its first reading.

Israel's prisoners' coordinator, Gal Hirsch, said he and Netanyahu backed the measure.

Ben Gvir said he would stop his party Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Power) voting with the governing coalition if the law isn't voted on by Sunday, threatening the government's survival.—Agencies / Monitoring Desk

AFGHAN earthquake survivors search through the remains of a damaged house at a village in Tashqurghan, in the Khulm district of Samangan province.—AFP

20 dead, over 500 injured as quake jolts Afghanistan

Mazar-i-Sharif's famous Blue Mosque damaged by tremors

SAMANGAN: A strong earthquake killed at least 20 people in northern Afghanistan, authorities said on Monday, just months after another deadly tremor that left the country reeling.

The 6.3-magnitude quake struck overnight at a depth of 28 kilometres (17 miles) with the epicentre near the city of Mazar-i-Sharif, according to the US Geological Survey.

"Based on the information we have so far, 534 people have been injured and more than 20 fatalities have been taken to hospitals in Samangan and Balkh provinces," health ministry spokesman Sharafat Zaman told journalists.

In Mazar-i-Sharif, one of Afghanistan's largest northern cities, an AFP correspondent saw residents scrambling out into the streets.

The city's famed Blue Mosque, a 15th-century landmark known for its vibrant tiles, was also damaged.

Pieces of the structure, particularly from one of its minarets, broke off and lay scattered across the mosque's grounds, one of the country's few remaining tourist spots.

Correspondents in the capital Kabul, around 420 kilometres by road to the south, also said they felt shaking.

Poor communication networks and infrastructure in mountainous Afghanistan have hampered disaster responses in the past, preventing authorities for hours or even days from reaching far-flung villages to assess the extent of the damage.

'Significant material losses'

The defence ministry said it had cleared and reopened the main road between Mazar-i-Sharif and the town of Kholm, and that it had rescued people who had been stranded there overnight.

"Numerous homes have been destroyed, and significant material losses have been incurred," Hamdullah Fitrat, deputy spokesman for the Taliban authorities, wrote on X, without specifying a number.

It is the latest natural disaster for the Taliban government, which has faced three major deadly earthquakes since taking over Afghanistan in 2021, even as the foreign aid that formed the backbone of the country's economy has dramatically dropped.

In August, a shallow 6.0-magnitude quake in the country's east wiped out mountainside villages and killed more than 2,200 people.

According to the World Bank, the August earthquake caused an estimated $183 million worth of damage to buildings and infrastructure.

Earthquakes are common in Afghanistan, particularly along the Hindu Kush mountain range, near where the Eurasian and Indian tectonic plates meet.

Large tremors in western Herat, near the Iranian border, in 2023, and in eastern Nangarhar province in 2022 killed hundreds and destroyed thousands of homes.

Many homes in the predominantly rural country— devastated by decades of war — are shoddily built.

Afghanistan is suffering from a humanitarian crisis compounded by drought, economic restrictions on the banking sector, and the pushback of millions of Afghan citizens from neighbouring Iran and Pakistan.

The United Nations and aid agencies have warned that hunger is rising.—AFP

OpenAI inks $38bn infrastructure deal with cloud giant

WASHINGTON: ChatGPT-maker OpenAI signed a $38 billion deal on Monday with Amazon's AWS cloud computing arm, as the artificial intelligence company continues on a major partnership spree that has also included Oracle, Broadcom, AMD and chip-making juggernant Nvidia.

Under the seven-year agreement, OpenAI, which is partly owned by AWS's archrival Microsoft, will gain access to computing resources including hundreds of thousands of state-of-the-art Nvidia GPUs, the crucial component of the generative artificial intelligence revolution.

The deal, which will grow over its multi-year term, will also give access to tens of millions of more conventional CPUs that will be used for the everyday deployment of so-called agentic AI.

"Scaling frontier AI requires massive, reliable compute," said OpenAI co-founder and CEO Sam Altman in a joint statement.

"Our partnership with AWS strengthens the broad compute ecosystem that will power this next era and bring advanced AI to everyone."

OpenAI will immediately begin utilising AWS computing, with all capacity targeted to be used before the end of 2026,.

Some estimates, OpenAI has inked approximately $1 trillion worth of infrastructure deals in 2025, including a $300bn Oracle deal and a $500bn Stargate project with Oracle and SoftBank.

The massive infrastructure spending comes as revenues in 2025 are expected to be in the tens of billions this year, but far from the amount needed to recoup the costs of computing needed to power OpenAI's powerful chatbots.—AFP

A TORCHBEARER of the Delhi Gharana, Ustad Saami poses alongside his sons Ustad Rauf, Ustad Urooj, Ahmed, and Azeem Saami.—Photo by Misaq Kazmi

Qawwali maestros to be honoured at Aga Khan Music Awards

Dawn Report

GENEVA: Qawwali maestro Ustad Naseeruddin Saami will be among nearly a dozen artists honoured at this year's Aga Khan Music Awards.

Ustad Saami — who performs alongside his sons Ustad Rauf, Ustad Urooj, Ahmed, and Azeem Saami as the Saami Bros — is widely regarded as Pakistan's preeminent living classical vocalist.

He is a torchbearer of the Delhi Gharana, and a recipient of the Tamgha-i-Imtiaz and the Pride of Performance.

Ustad Saami will be honoured with the Patron's Award, alongside Indian Qawwals Naseer and Nazeer Ahmed Khan Warsi, according to an announcement from the organisers.

The dual honour celebrates the remarkable musical lineages of the great poet Amir Khusro, who was instrumental in shaping a large part of the music and cultural history of South Asia.

The awards headline a four-day festival, celebrating music from the 'Great East', and will be held in London's Southbank Centre from Nov 20 to 23, with the awards ceremony being held on Nov 22.

They honour individuals, groups, and institutions whose work sustains and reimagines living musical heritage shaped by Islam while promoting spiritual insight, community vitality, and cultural resilience.

Among this year's laureates are Bahrain's Qalali Folk Band; Palestinian oud player and vocalist Kamilya Jubran; and Iranian composer Sahba Aminikia. In addition, Mariam Bagayoko, the 87-year-old Malian musician known as the 'Nightingale of B l dougou', will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award.

ICC warns Sudan violence may constitute war crimes

THE HAGUE: The prosecutor's office at the International Criminal Court warned Monday that atrocities committed in the Sudanese city of El-Fasher could constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

After 18 months of siege, bombardment and starvation, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) seized control of the city on October 26, dislodging the army's last stronghold in Sudan's western Darfur region.

The ICC prosecutor's office (OTP) voiced "profound alarm and deepest concern" over reports from El-Fasher about mass killings, rapes, and other crimes allegedly committed.

"These atrocities are part of a broader pattern of violence that has afflicted the entire Darfur region since April 2023," said the OTP in a statement.

"Such acts, if substantiated, may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute," the founding text of the ICC, added the OTP.

The UN has said more than 65,000 people have fled El-Fasher, including around 5,000 to the nearby town of Tawila, but tens of thousands remain trapped.

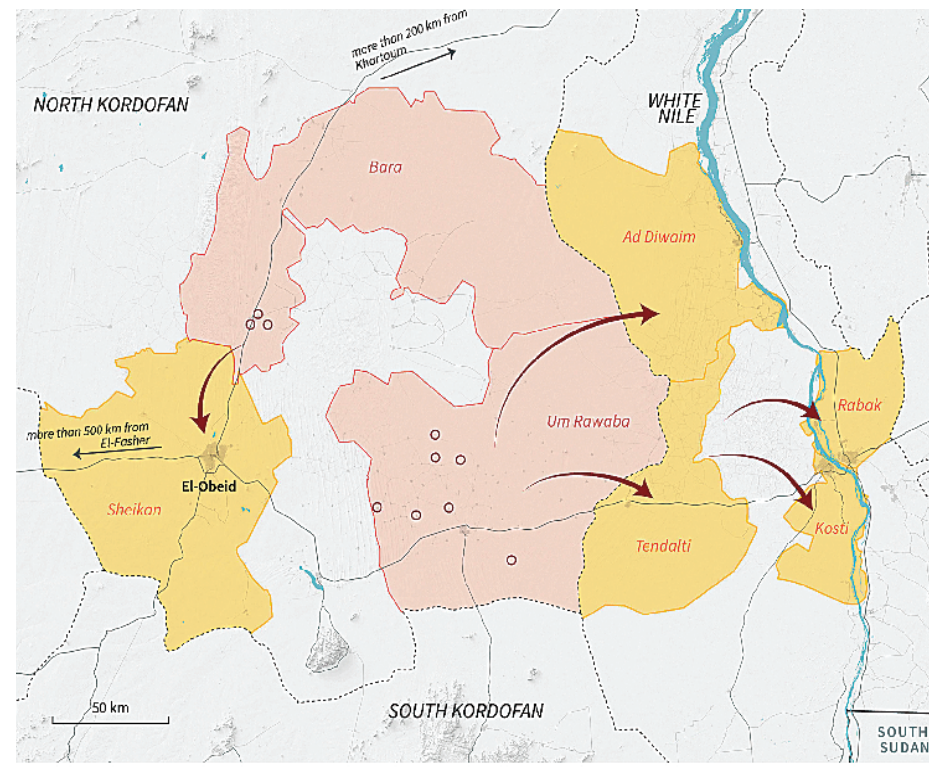
Before the final assault, roughly 260,000 people lived in the city.

Since the RSF takeover, reports have emerged of executions, sexual violence, looting, attacks on aid workers and abductions in and around El-Fasher, where communications remain largely cut off.

The RSF traces its origins to the Janjaweed, a predominantly Arab militia accused of genocide in Darfur two decades ago.

Reports since El-Fasher's fall have raised fears of a return to similar atrocities.

Last month, the ICC convicted a feared Janjaweed chief for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur more than two decades ago.—AFP



Trump names Pakistan among countries 'testing N-weapons'

• No reaction from Foreign Office, but experts disagree with the claim • US clarifies it doesn't intend to restart full-scale live weapons testing

By Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has claimed that Pakistan is among a handful of countries "testing nuclear weapons", a statement that comes days after Islamabad emphasised the safety, security, and peaceful use of its nuclear programme at the United Nations.

The remarks by the US president have prompted scrutiny from experts, lawmakers, and international observers, who say there is no evidence to support claims of renewed nuclear testing by Pakistan.

Speaking on CBS' *60 Minutes* over the weekend, Trump said: "North Korea has been testing. Pakistan has been testing. […] But they don't go and tell you about it."

"Russia's testing, and China's testing, but they don't talk about it. You know, we're an open society. We're different. We talk about it. We have to talk about it."

There was no official reaction from Pakistan's Foreign Office.

President Trump, who recently directed the Pentagon to resume nuclear weapons testing, said he did not want the United States to be "the only country that does not do so".

On his *Truth Social* platform, he wrote: "Because of other countries' testing programmes, I have instructed the Department of War to start testing our nuclear weapons on an equal basis."

Trump further claimed that while the US has "more nuclear weapons than any other country", China could catch up "within five years". But experts say the claim lacks supporting data, given the current gap between the US and Chinese arsenals.

At a UN General Assembly debate earlier this week, Pakistan underscored its "vast experience in operating a safe, secure, and fully safeguarded nuclear power programme".

An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report confirmed that nuclear materials in India and Pakistan remained in peaceful use.

The agency also clarified that there was no radiation leak from any Pakistani nuclear facility following Indian air strikes during the May conflict, alleviating concerns over potential nuclear escalation.

Pakistan recently signed with IAEA a Country Programme Framework for 2026 to 2031 (CPF), which outlines cooperation in nuclear medicine, water management, sustainable energy, and capacity building.

US clarification

But on Monday, US Energy Secretary Chris Wright sought to allay global concerns, clarifying that Washington is not planning actual detonations.

"These are not nuclear explosions. These are what we call non-critical explosions," he said on *Fox News*.

"I think the tests we're talking about right now are system tests. These are not nuclear explosions."

Wright explained that only components would be tested, with advanced simulations providing precise predictions of nuclear detonation effects.

"With our science and computation power, we can simulate incredibly accurately exactly what will happen in a nuclear explosion," Wright added.

"Now we simulate the conditions that delivered that and, as we change bomb designs, what they will deliver."

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